

2026



PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

# Our Dream, Our Home, Our Future

2026 Development Plan for the Partners for Progress  
Facility

PRESENTED BY:

Diane Helgeland

# About Partners for Progress

Partners For Progress (PFP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality, equine-assisted therapies to individuals with physical, mental, and emotional challenges. Opening our doors in 2005, PFP services about 1,312 hours every month; per year, that's 15,744 hours we spend helping clients from Northeastern Illinois and Southeastern Wisconsin reach their goals. Our programs are designed to maximize personal potential, welfare, and self-achievement, supported by a 79% success rate in goal achievement over 20 years of documented outcomes. PFP provides the highest quality of care, standing behind our 3Q service delivery: Quality Horse, Quality Program, Quality Life.

We offer unique, individualized goal-oriented programs with regular evaluations. We are the only therapeutic riding center in Illinois and Wisconsin that sponsors a national traveling show team, we support a Special Olympics competitive riding team, and offer a comprehensive Veterans Program.

**Mission Statement:** PFP aims to improve the quality of life for individuals with different abilities through innovative equine-assisted programs, focusing on therapy, education, and sport.

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## ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT



**Diane Helgeland**  
Founder & Executive  
Director



**Amanda Braden**  
Director of Operations



**Karin Kepski**  
Program Coordinator



**Anne Margaret Huffman**  
Director of Community  
Relations



**Jamie Herald**  
Equine Manager



**Shea Rumoro**  
Director of Development

# Mission and Vision

We believe in the transformative power of equine therapy to change lives. As we continue to grow and serve more riders, we request financial support to ensure the funds to purchase the land and building of our facility, and help our facility meet the needs of our expanding community. This renovation plan will not only secure the future of our programs by purchasing the land and building we currently use but also enable critical renovations and expansions that will allow us to provide even greater support to our clients.



## MISSION

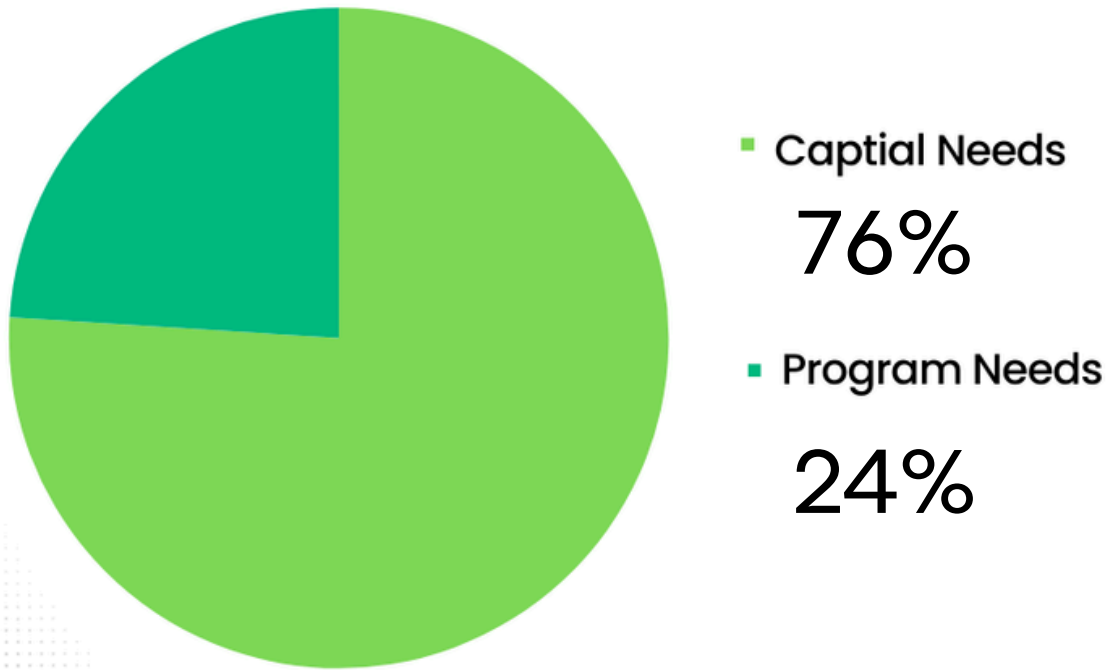
PFP's current location provides everything needed to expand its programs, including 20 acres of serene land, a well-built barn facility with stables, office areas, bathrooms, a heated indoor arena, two outdoor arenas, four pastures, and ample parking. The site also offers the potential for a custom-designed renovation to create an environmentally friendly, fully accessible, state-of-the-art therapeutic equestrian center.



## VISION

The renovations and additions outlined will not only enhance the physical structure of our facility but also profoundly impact the experiences and opportunities available to our riders and community. With these additions and developments, PFP can continue to scale, offering more diverse programs for a wider range of needs to those with unique limitations. Together, we can build brighter futures, one rider, one horse, one step at a time.

# OUR NEEDS



76% of the required needs will go towards the physical renovations and upgrades needed to strengthen and expand our organization. This includes additions like new indoor arena footing, outdoor paddocks, a new parking lot and carport, an outdoor covered event space, and more. Moreover, we plan to expand our offerings and services with new additions like a small animal barn, a Horticultural Garden, a Sensory Trail, new therapy rooms, a new staff kitchen area, and more, (listed on page 5).

24% of these funds will go toward Program Expansion. PFP prioritizes opportunity creation for all, providing job opportunities through our Job Skills program, and offering scholarships to those in need, however we want to amplify these offerings of our organization.

We plan to create an occupational life-skills program, job training for individuals with special needs, continue to provide state-of-the-art CHA instructor training, establish a mentoring program for trainees, and host workshops for instructors, therapists, and volunteers to expand on our training.

# The Impact

## Stability and Security

The first, most foundational benefit of this developmental plan is purchasing the land and facility we currently operate on. Ownership provides stability and gives us the freedom to customize the space to perfectly suit the needs of our riders, staff, and volunteers. In the long run, it allows us to focus resources on serving more clients and expanding programs without worrying about fluctuating rental costs or the potential loss of our location.

## Expanded Capacity for Service

The renovations, particularly the barn overhaul, will allow us to increase our capacity for hosting therapy sessions. With new indoor arena footing, we'll create a safer and more comfortable environment for horses and riders alike. A cushioned and stable surface minimizes injury risks and ensures that sessions can run smoothly. The addition of an outdoor covered event space will allow us to host sessions and events throughout the year, regardless of weather conditions, ensuring no therapy time is lost. More available space and year-round flexibility will directly result in more therapy hours and better outcomes for our riders.

## Improved Accessibility and Inclusivity

At Partners for Progress, inclusivity and accessibility are at the core of everything we do. By adding a new parking lot and carport, we will create a more welcoming and accessible environment for all. These upgrades will ensure that clients, volunteers, and families with physical challenges or limitations can arrive here with extra support and help remove some of the complexities of transferring clients to the arena, enhancing the experience for every diverse visitor. Accessibility isn't just about physical spaces—it's about removing barriers and ensuring every child, regardless of ability, can benefit from their time at PFP.



# The Impact

## Better Care for Our Horses

Our therapy horses are at the heart of our program, and the new outdoor paddocks will provide them with ample space to roam, exercise, and relax when they aren't working. Healthy, happy horses are essential to the quality of our programs, and by investing in their well-being, we ensure that they are always ready to deliver their best during therapy sessions. The new equipment—such as the Bobcat, tractor, and other maintenance tools—will allow us to keep the barn and paddocks in top condition, ensuring that our horses' living and working environments are clean, safe, and well-maintained.

## Holistic Therapeutic Approach

One of the most exciting components of this plan is the creation of a Small Animal Barn and an Outdoor Horticultural Garden with a Sensory Trail. These additions will allow us to expand beyond equine therapy into other forms of nature-based therapeutic experiences. The Small Animal Barn will give our riders a chance to interact with a variety of animals, promoting sensory engagement, emotional connection, and responsibility. This variety of animal interactions can be particularly helpful for children who may be hesitant around horses or those who benefit from different types of animal-assisted therapy.

The Sensory Trail will create a serene, outdoor space where riders can relax, reflect, and connect with nature. It will engage their senses in new and calming ways, allowing them to process emotions, build self-awareness, and develop a deeper connection to their surroundings. The garden will stimulate touch, sight, smell, and sound, providing unique opportunities for emotional regulation and mental health support. This peaceful environment will promote mindfulness and reduce anxiety, offering riders a holistic therapeutic experience that goes beyond the barn and arena.

## Mental Health and Emotional Growth

By offering these additional therapeutic spaces and experiences, we are addressing not just physical therapy needs but also emotional and mental health challenges. Children with special needs often face high levels of anxiety, stress, and difficulty processing emotions. The addition of nature-based therapy, through both the Horticultural Garden and the Sensory Trail, gives riders the space and tools to better manage these feelings. Nature has a well-documented calming effect on mental health, and combining it with therapeutic riding helps children feel more at ease, fostering emotional growth, improved mood, and resilience.



# Sequence of Events

The renovation will be conducted in several phases:

Phase I focuses on securing the funds necessary to purchase the former Fallen Oaks Equestrian Center.

Phase II involves finalizing all aspects necessary to conduct a custom-designed renovation that will allow for efficient and effective therapy rooms, classrooms, meeting space, dry storage, an additional indoor viewing area, a kitchen area, and upgraded administrative offices.

Phase III aims to secure funds necessary to conduct the expansion and improvement of outdoor facilities including sensory trail, garden area, upgraded accessibility, upgraded facility maintenance equipment, additional facility maintenance equipment, and expanding outdoor watering abilities.

Phase IV requires fundraising necessary to establish a self-maintaining Horse Care Fund to offer stability through tough weather times, like the 2012 drought, a self-maintaining Scholarship Fund that will increase the availability of financial aid for those participating riders in need, and a Planned Giving Program to strengthen the future of both funds.





# Program Expansion



## Property Acquisition

Secure funds to purchase the facility, ensuring stability and growth potential.



## Program Expansion

At Partners for Progress, we service about 1,312 hours every month. These hours of service include our program, Hippotherapy, Power Hour, Sports Riding, OLS, campers, Horse Shows, Volunteers, and occasionally group sessions. Within those hours, we fine-tune each session to our client's needs, addressing every client as an individual and assessing their goals to create a plan towards achievement. The success of our client and their achievements directly correlates to our amazing staff and the extensive training they undergo, as well as incredible patience and care for others.

### Enhancing Therapeutic Programs

We are expanding our therapeutic programs to offer more diverse and impactful experiences for our clients. Key to this expansion is the development of a Horticultural Sensory Integration Program, made possible by the addition of a Small Animal Barn and an Outdoor Horticultural Garden and Sensory Trail. These new elements will provide a rich, sensory-based environment where clients can engage with nature and animals, offering new therapeutic pathways to enhance emotional regulation, sensory stimulation, and connection with their surroundings.

These additions will also allow us to increase occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) hours, while expanding cornerstone programs like Equine Experiential Learning and Heroes on Horses. We will also introduce new educational initiatives such as an occupational life skills program and job training for individuals with special needs. These offerings will provide clients with practical, real-world skills that promote independence and foster personal growth.

### Investing in Training and Education

To maintain our commitment to excellence, we are also investing heavily in the training and development of our staff and volunteers. We will be offering state-of-the-art CHA instructor training, as well as creating a mentoring program to ensure that new trainees receive hands-on guidance and support from experienced professionals.

In addition to these certifications, we will host workshops for instructors, therapists, and volunteers, providing continuing education opportunities to keep our team informed on best practices, safety, and innovative therapeutic techniques. By equipping our staff with the best training available, we will ensure that our programs continue to meet the highest standards of care and safety.




# PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS



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